

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1818

INFO USCINCSO FOR POLAD

DIA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN: PEREZ JIMENEZ DECLINES  
TO SUPPORT A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

REF: CARACAS 9555

SUMMARY: EX-DICTATOR MARCOS PEREZ JIMENEZ HAS CALLED ON HIS FOLLOWERS IN EFFECT TO ABSTAIN FROM VOTING FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN THE DECEMBER 9 ELECTIONS, BUT TO VOTE FOR THE LEGISLATIVE SLATES OF ONE OF THE PEREZJIMENISTA PARTIES. THIS PRONOUNCEMENT IS A BLOW TO DESARROLLISTA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PEDRO TINOCO AND LEAVES THE PEREZJIMENISTA MOVEMENT IN DISSARRAY, BUT IS NOT EXPECTED TO HAVE AN APPRECIABLE EFFECT ON THE CLOSE RACE BETWEEN AD AND COPEI. IT APPEARS THAT PEREZ JIMENEZ WISHES TO AVOID BEING IDENTIFIED WITH THE UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS OF A SURROGATE CANDIDATE. END SUMMARY.

1. AT A NOVEMBER 19 NEWS CONFERENCE PABLO SALAS CASTILLO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CRUZADA CIVICA NACIONALISTA (CCN), ANNOUNCED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POSITION OF EX-DICTATOR MARCOS PEREZ JIMENEZ (PJ) WITH REGARD TO THE

DECEMBER 9 ELECTIONS. SALAS READ A STATEMENT, SAID TO HAVE BEEN SIGNED BY PJ, IN WHICH PJ STATES THAT HE DOES NOT RECOMMEND THAT HIS FOLLOWERS VOTE FOR ANY OF THE CURRENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, BUT THAT THEY SHOULD VOTE FOR THE LEGISLATIVE SLATE OF THE POLITICAL GROUP SHARING HIS IDEAS, AND WHICH WITHDRAWS ITS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FROM THE RACE, NAMELY THE CCN. VARIOUS REASONS FOR PJ'S POSITION ARE GIVEN, INCLUDING CHARGES OF FRAUD IN THE 1968 ELECTIONS AND SUSPICIONS OF FRAUD IN THIS YEAR'S CONTEST. SALAS, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM SEVERAL DAYS' CONSULTATIONS WITH PJ IN MADRID, ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION OFFICIALLY TO WITHDRAW HIS CANDIDACY IN ACCORDANCE WITH PJ'S POSITION.

2. PJ'S APPARENT CALL FOR ABSTENTION IN THE PRESIDENTIAL VOTING AND HIS REQUEST THAT HIS FOLLOWERS VOTE FOR THE LEGISLATIVE SLATE OF THE CCN IS EXPECTED TO HURT THE ELECTION PROSPECTS OF THE PEREZJIMENISTA PARTIES NOT ALLIED WITH THE CCN, AS WELL AS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES (ESPECIALLY PEDRO TINOCO OF THE DESARROLLISTAS) WHO WERE HOPING TO RECEIVE THE EX-DICTATOR'S BACKING. IT IS UNCERTAIN WHAT THE TWO REMAINING PEREZJIMENISTA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES (ALEJANDRO GOMEZ SILVA OF THE FRENTE UNIDO NACIONALISTA (FUN) AND RAIMUNDO VERDE ROJAS OF THE MOVIMIENTO DEMOCRATA INDEPENDIENTE (MDI)) WILL DO, ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN PRESS REPORTS OF FUN'S EFFORTS TO REACH AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE WITH THE UNION REPUBLICANA DEMOCRATICA (URD). TINOCO HAS OFTEN SAID HE WILL CONTINUE AS A CANDIDATE EVEN IF PJ REFUSES TO BACK HIM, AND IT APPEARS THAT HIS PEREZJIMENISTA ELECTORAL ALLY, THE PARTIDO NACIONAL INTEGRACIONISTA, WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT TINOCO DESPITE THE LATEST WORD FROM PJ. MONTHS AGO YET ANOTHER PEREZJIMENISTA PARTY, THE MOVIMIENTO POPULAR JUSTICIALISTA (MPJ) THREW ITS SUPPORT TO COPEI PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LORENZO FERNANDEZ, AND DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS FERNANDEZ HAS ADDED THE BACKING OF A GROUP OF CCN DISSIDENTS CALLING ITSELF THE MOVIMIENTO INDEPENDIENTE NACIONALISTA. IN SHORT, THE PEREZJIMENISTA MOVEMENT WILL GO INTO THE ELECTIONS IN A VERY FRAGMENTED AND CONFUSED CONDITION.

3. THE EFFECT OF PJ'S DECISION ON THE GENERAL ELECTORATE IS DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN. A YEAR AGO, BEFORE THE ENACTMENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROHIBITING PJ'S CANDIDACY, IT APPEARED THAT PJ ENJOYED THE SUPPORT OF A LARGE BLOC OF VOTERS (20 O/O OR MORE, ACCORDING TO SOME POLLS), THE MAJORITY OF WHICH PROBABLY HAD NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRONG TIES TO ANY OF THE PEREZJIMENISTA PARTIES, BUT WHO WERE ATTRACTED TO THE EXDICTATOR OUT OF A SENSE OF PROTEST AGAINST AD AND COPEI. SINCE PJ'S DISQUALIFICATION HOWEVER, SOME OF THIS PROTEST VOTE MAY HAVE DRIFTED TO THE MOVIMIENTO AL SOCIALISMO (MAS) AND THE URD. ALSO, AS NOTED BOVE, THERE IS SOME PEREZJIMENISTA SUPPORT FOR COPEI, THOUGH IT APPEARS THAT PRESIDENT CALDERA'S ACTION IN ORDERING THE ARREST OF SEVERAL PEREZJIMENISTAS (REFTEL) MAY HAVE PRECLUDED LARGE-SCALE PEREZJIMENISTA DEFECTIONS TO COPEI.

PUBLIC OPINION POLLS EVEN INDICATE THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF PJ AS A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, AD PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ WILL DRAW SOME PEREZJIMENISTA VOTES ON THE BASIS OF HIS "LAW AND ORDER" IMAGE. NEVERTHELESS, SOME WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FOLLOW PJ'S RECOMMENDATIONS (AS OUTLINED IN PARA ONE), BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS AS TO HOW MANY WILL DO SO. IN ANY EVENT, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE LATEST WORD FROM PJ WILL HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON THE CLOSE CONTEST BETWEEN AD AND COPEI.

4. COMMENT: PJ'S FAILURE TO BACK A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IS PROBABLY EXPLAINED BY HIS RELUCTANCE TO INVOLVE HIS PRESTIGE WITH THE DUBIOUS PROSPECTS OF AN ELECTORAL SURROGATE. HE EVIDENTLY HOPES THAT BY WIPING HIS HANDS OF THIS YEAR'S PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST HE WILL REMAIN A LIGHTNING ROD FOR DISCONTENT IN THE YEARS TO COME.  
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